

In the Matter of:	)	Docket HWCA 96/97-3013
	)	
Phibro-Tech, Inc.	)	ORDER FOR INVESTIGATION
8851 Dice Road	)	
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670	)	Health and Safety Code
EPA ID# CAD008488025	)	Section 25187.1
	)	
<u>Respondent.</u>	)	

1.1. Parties. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (Department) issues this Order for Investigation (Order) to Phibro-Tech, Inc. (Respondent).

1.3. Jurisdiction. Section 25187.1 of the Health and Safety Code (HSC) authorizes the Department to issue an order requiring the current or past owner or operator of a site to conduct monitoring, testing, analysis, and reporting to ascertain the extent and nature of the hazard when the Department determines that the presence or release of hazardous waste may present a substantial hazard to human health or the environment.

2.0. Site. A chemical plant has been located at 8851 Dice Road, in Santa Fe Springs, California for approximately 35 years. Phibro-Tech (PTI) has operated the facility since 1994. The facility property is generally flat, irregularly shaped, approximately 800 feet east to west, and a maximum width of approximately 300 feet north to south, for a total area of

1 approximately 4.8 acres. There is a rail siding on the south side  
2 of the property, and Southern Pacific railroad tracks also run on  
3 the other side of the property. The closest residential areas are  
4 approximately 1,000 feet to the northwest. The facility property  
5 is bounded easterly by Dice Road, northerly by Burke Street,  
6 westerly by Norwalk Blvd., and southerly by Los Nietos. The  
7 surrounding area is used for light and medium industrial  
8 activities.

9 PTI's parent company is Phillip Brothers Chemical, Inc. (PBC),  
10 a New York corporation, which is located at One Parker Plaza, Fort  
11 Lee, NJ 07024.

12 PBC acquired CP Chemicals, Inc. in 1954, and acquired Southern  
13 California Chemical's Santa Fe Springs, California, and Garland,  
14 Texas plants in 1984. Another subsidiary of PBC, formed in 1985,  
15 is Agtrol Chemical Products. In 1988, PBC acquired CP Inorganics,  
16 with plants in Union City, California, and Joliet Illinois. In  
17 1991, PBC acquired Olin Hunt.

18 In 1994, PBC formed PTI as a corporate entity which combined  
19 CP Chemicals, Southern California Chemical, and CP Inorganics into  
20 one company.

21 2.1. History. PTI is an inorganic chemical manufacturer.  
22 PTI manufactures ammoniacal and acid based etchants, brightness  
23 conditioners, solder strippers and other specialty chemicals used  
24 primarily in the manufacture of printed circuit boards. Copper  
25 oxide and copper sulfate are also produced. PTI generates  
26 hazardous waste and is also a registered hazardous waste hauler.

27

1 PTI manages a variety of aqueous hazardous wastes, including  
2 spent etchants, solder strippers, plating solutions, conditioners,  
3 brighteners, miscellaneous inorganic acidic and alkaline materials,  
4 and then recycles them to recover the metals (copper) and etchants.  
5 Other hazardous waste accepted are metal bearing wastestreams  
6 (primarily copper containing wastes), waste inorganic acidic and  
7 alkaline materials. The materials variably contain copper, iron,  
8 fluorides, inorganic peroxides, tin, lead, chromium, nickel,  
9 assorted trace heavy metals, sulfates, chlorides and hydroxides.

10 PTI operates a variety of waste management units with  
11 manufacturing and operational equipment including reactors,  
12 settling tanks, holding tanks, wastewater treatment tanks, filter  
13 presses, process and storm drain sumps, drum storage areas and drum  
14 and truck washing areas.

15 PTI (dba Southern California Chemical) filed a Part A on June  
16 30, 1980, in order to comply with RCRA regulations, for operation  
17 of a storage and treatment facility using tanks, containers and  
18 surface impoundments at 8851 Dice Road in Santa Fe Springs, in Los  
19 Angeles County, California. An Interim Status Document was issued  
20 by the Department of Health Services (DHS) on December 16, 1981  
21 (DHS is the predecessor of DTSC). PTI's DHS Hazardous Waste  
22 Facility Permit was approved July 29, 1991, with an expiration date  
23 of July 29, 1996. PTI is currently appealing a Permit Modification  
24 for corrective action which involves remediation of contaminated  
25 soil and groundwater.

26 The original permit has expired, but it is still in effect due  
27 to PTI submitting a timely permit renewal application. The terms

1 and conditions of the original permit remain in effect until  
2 otherwise directed by the Department.

3       2.2. Contamination at the Site. Past uses of the facility  
4 property include a railroad switching station and foundry casting  
5 facility (in the 1950s). From 1957-1960, the site was operated by  
6 Pacific Western Chemical Company, a chemical manufacturing  
7 operation. In 1959, it became known as Southern California  
8 Chemical. In 1984, Southern California Chemical was purchased by  
9 CP Chemicals. In 1991, the site became known as Entech Recovery  
10 Services, and in 1994, the name was changed to Phibro-Tech,  
11 Incorporated.

12       2.2.1. Soil and groundwater contamination. The facility  
13 has been cited for the violations of illegal disposal of hazardous  
14 waste and for not operating and maintaining the facility in a  
15 fashion that would minimize the possibility of a release of  
16 hazardous waste to the air, soil and groundwater. As early as July  
17 7, 1983, the federal EPA verified that past disposal and spills had  
18 occurred on the Site. The DHS, in a November 30, 1987, Preliminary  
19 Assessment document, also noted this and further stated that this  
20 information had also been reported in a Los Angeles County Health  
21 Department inspection, where soil contamination was found to be  
22 evident on an off-site railroad culvert.

23       In June, 1986, the DHS conducted sampling inspections of soil  
24 at the Site. The inspections resulted in the citations of  
25 hazardous waste law violations and an enforcement action. In  
26 August, 1987, PTI signed a Consent Agreement with the DHS which  
27 addressed all violations found. Several of the Consent Order

1 Agreement elements were directed towards mitigating potential  
2 threats to human health and the environment.

3 In December, 1988, PTI and the EPA signed a Consent Order  
4 agreement (Docket No. RCRA-09-89-0001) to settle previous  
5 violations. The Consent Order Agreement required PTI to conduct a  
6 RCRA Facility Investigation (RFI), Corrective Measures Study (CMS)  
7 and Pre-Investigation Evaluation of Corrective Measures (PIECM).  
8 The RFI Phase I and II reports, CMS report, RFI Executive Summary,  
9 and RCRA Facility Risk Assessment report have been completed. The  
10 RFI reports have identified that the soil and groundwater are  
11 contaminated at the Site.

12 The RFI identified that the shallow groundwater, within the  
13 Hollydale Aquifer, beneath the PTI facility, contains elevated  
14 levels of chromium, cadmium, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene and  
15 tetrachloroethane. Soils in certain areas of the site were  
16 identified as containing elevated levels of heavy metals,  
17 halogenated volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls,  
18 petroleum hydrocarbons, and various inorganics.

19 The April 23, 1993, RCRA Risk Assessment Report (RA) provided  
20 a quantitative analysis of the chemicals of concern at the site,  
21 exposure scenarios that depict expected exposure conditions and  
22 intakes, assessment of toxicity of chemicals under expected  
23 exposure conditions, and the evaluation of potential impacts to  
24 human health from surface soil contamination at the facility. The  
25 RA also evaluated the RFI data. The soil contamination is at  
26 levels unacceptable for allowing the site to be acceptable for  
27 residential development. A deed restriction notice does not yet

1 apply to the site to prevent any future residential use of the  
2 property, but it was proposed as part of the Permit Modification,  
3 which is currently under appeal.

4 On August 2, 1993, EPA approved the RFI Phase II Report, RFI  
5 Executive Summary, and the RA, all dated April 23, 1993.  
6 Subsequently, a CMS report, dated August 27, 1993, identified and  
7 evaluated the potential corrective measures to address soil and  
8 groundwater contamination at the site.

9 The Department issued a Permit Modification, on June 30, 1995,  
10 for Section V, Corrective Action of Solid Waste Management Units,  
11 of the existing California Hazardous Waste Facility Permit No. 91-  
12 3-TS-002, for implementing the selected Corrective Measures to  
13 remediate, monitor and contain soil and groundwater contamination  
14 at the Site. PTI is currently appealing the Permit Modification  
15 Corrective Action Order.

16 During a complaint inspection in May, 1996, the Department  
17 found evidence that a spill occurred on the southern side of the  
18 site. During the complaint inspection, the Department staff  
19 observed a blue-green stain on gravel and soil leading from the  
20 rail spur on-site, to off-site, and into a drainage ditch and the  
21 stain went further down that ditch to the other side of Dice road.

22 This drainage ditch (referred to by locals as "Coyote Creek")  
23 receives stormwater runoff from parcels both north and south of the  
24 site. This ditch is not formally named, but it runs east-west and  
25 is adjacent to, and south of, the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks.  
26 From this drainage ditch, runoff would discharge into Sorenson  
27 Avenue Drain which is a quarter mile east of the site. This drain

1 feeds into La Canada Leffingwell Creek which flows into the North  
2 Fork Coyote Creek and eventually into the San Gabriel River.

3 The Department staff sampled the soil in the area along the  
4 south side of the rail spur, at a drain outside the site's  
5 perimeter fence and along a drainage ditch further south of the  
6 site, and in the ditch just south of Dice Road. The results were:  
7 at the rail spur, next to perimeter fence, 8,700 mg/kg Cu; at the  
8 south corner gate area adjacent to the rail spur, 11,000 mg/kg Cu;  
9 at the drain on the other side of site's perimeter fence, that goes  
10 under the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks into the "Coyote Creek"  
11 drainage ditch, 8,800 mg/kg and 26,000 mg/kg Cu; at the culvert  
12 exit on the south side of the rail tracks at the pipe, 6,900 mg/kg  
13 Cu, and half a block east at the other side of Dice Road, 890 mg/kg  
14 Cu. The regulatory level for considering copper to be at hazardous  
15 levels is 2,500 mg/kg. Other hazardous constituents that were  
16 found are zinc, lead, nickel and barium. Background samples of  
17 soil from various areas around the site in Santa Fe Springs, did  
18 not detect hazardous levels of any metals.

19 The Department, in its July, 1996, Summary of Violations,  
20 cited PTI for a release of hazardous waste. Since this release  
21 went off-site and into a drainage ditch that carries effluent that  
22 eventually reaches the San Gabriel River, the Department submitted  
23 a Proposition 65 Notice.

24 Pursuant to this Order the Department is seeking to have PTI  
25 conduct monitoring, analysis and compile reports, to ascertain the  
26 extent and nature of the hazard, to determine the areal extent of  
27 the contamination for the on- and off-site contamination from this



Cal/EPA

Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control

1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91201

November 26, 1996



**CERTIFIED MAIL**

**Return Receipt Requested**  
**P 388 573 712**

*Pete Wilson*  
Governor

*James M. Strock*  
Secretary for  
Environmental  
Protection

**Mr. Ed Vigil**  
**Phibro-Tech, Inc.**  
**8851 Dice Road**  
**Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670**

**Dear Mr. Vigil:**

**IN THE MATTER OF: ENFORCEMENT ORDER DOCKET HWCA**  
**96/97-3012, ORDER OF INVESTIGATION DOCKET HWCA**  
**96/97-3013, PHIBRO-TECH, CO. INC., SANTA FE**  
**SPRINGS, EPA ID NUMBER CAD 008 488 025**

Enclosed is an Enforcement Order, issued pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25187. Also enclosed is an Order for Investigation, issued pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code 25187.1, regarding additional monitoring and testing that Phibro-Tech will need to complete.

Pursuant to the Health and Safety Code Section 25187 you have a right to a hearing regarding the Enforcement Order HWCA 96/97-3012. A written request for a hearing must be delivered to the Department of Toxic Substances Control or postmarked within 20 days of the date of this letter or you will waive your right to a hearing.

Whether or not you choose to request a hearing you are encouraged to explore the possibility of settlement by contacting Ann Iaali, at the address listed above, or by phone at (818) 551-2869.

**Sincerely,**

*Florence Gharibian*

**Florence Gharibian, Chief**  
**Statewide Compliance Division**  
**Southern California Branch**

**Enclosures**





cc:

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